

Claims 1-3, 6-10 and 12-28 have been rejected under Section 102 as anticipated by Takahashi; and claims 4, 5 and 11 have been rejected under Section 103 as obvious from Takahashi. These rejections are respectfully traversed.

As pointed in the second paragraph on page 9 of the Reply filed January 9, 2008, Takahashi does not qualify as "prior art", because the present application is entitled to the date of the Japanese priority application of July 16, 2001, with Takahashi only being entitled as "prior art" to its filing date of December 4, 2001, **well after** applicants' priority date.

The final office actions states near the top of page 7 that applicants' foreign priority date must be perfected by the filing of an English language translation of the priority application. Accordingly, attached hereto is a verified translation of applicants' Japanese priority application, confirming that applicants' claims are entitled to the Japanese priority date, thus antedating Takahashi and removing such document as "prior art".

Thus, both rejections being based on Takahashi, which is not "prior art", should now be withdrawn. Such is respectfully requested.

For the record, what is stated above is not to be taken as any abandonment by applicants of the other arguments submitted in the last Reply.

Applicants note that no other prior art has been applied against applicants' claims, whereby applicants understand that the other prior art documents of record which are not relied upon by the PTO are deemed by the PTO to be insufficiently material to apply against applicants' claims.

Applicants believe that they have addressed all issues raised in the Final Action, and that this reply and the attached verified translation of the priority application should place the present application in condition for allowance. Applicants accordingly respectfully request favorable consideration and early formal allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

BROWDY AND NEIMARK, P.L.L.C.  
Attorneys for Applicant

By



Sheridan Neimark  
Registration No. 20,520

SN:jnj  
Telephone No.: (202) 628-5197  
Facsimile No.: (202) 737-3528  
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